rather than before it, saying that the complete word is *Aha*, as in *Vaha*. His words are as follows: *Queritur cur in Vah et Ah post vocales ponitur aspiratio; et dicimus quod apocopa facta est extremæ vocalis cui præponebatur aspiratio, nam perfecta Vaha et Aha sunt. Ideo abscissione facta extremæ vocalis, tamen aspiratio mansit ex superiore pendens vocali. Quia suum est interiectionis voce abscondita proferri.** That is to say, 'The question is asked, why in *Vah* and in *Ah* the aspirate is placed after the vowel, seeing that *Vaha* and *Aha* are complete words; and to this we reply that there is here an apocope (that is, a cutting off of the last vowel), leaving the aspirate attached to the preceding one. For it is the attribute and nature of the interjection to be pronounced in a veiled† voice.' Plautus, in his comedy *Mercator*, uses the A substantively, and as a letter taken for a number, when he introduces Demipho saying: *Hodie ire in ludum occœpi literarium, Lysimache: ternas scio jam, A. M. O.*‡ That is to say: 'Lysimachus, to-day I began to go to school; I know three letters already—A. M. O.'‡

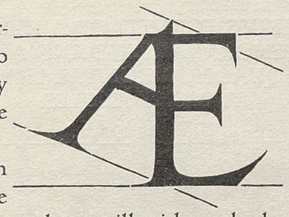
* 1, 5, 25.

† '*Absconse et stomaqueuse*,' literally, 'hidden (Latin *absconditā*) and from the stomach.' The last qualification is not in the Latin which the author is supposed to be translating.

‡ The point in Plautus's play is, of course, that the three letters spell *amo*, 'I love.'

THE A combined with another vowel makes a diphthong, that is to say, a syllable containing two vowels; and this in Greek & Latin alike. But in French I find more than two vowels together in a syllable and diphthong, as I could easily prove did I not choose rather to pass on, for brevity's sake.

BEfore I proceed, however, I would at this point earnestly counsel printers and writers concerning this diphthong AE, and say that it should be written in such wise that the A and E are separated at the top & joined at their base. When they are written in a running hand, and not capitals, as I have already said, they should be closely joined together. Wherein Frobenius and almost all other printers have gone astray hitherto, when they have joined capital A and E together in this manner, Æ, in which the one or the other must needs be changed from its true form & shape. For if the A be set upright, the E, being joined to the said A, will be tipped up; or, in like manner, if the E be set straight, the A, being joined to the E, will be tipped up, and will have its first leg outside its proper line, which is contrary to the art of fashioning the Attic letter, which should always be complete in itself, and stand perpendicularly on a transverse horizontal line.



WHen the E is set upright on a horizontal line, & the A is joined to it at the top, the said A is moved away from the said horizontal line, as you see in this drawing.

IF, then, you would write and fashion properly this diphthong A & E, make it in the manner and form here shown, and you will, without doubt, find the reason therefor to be good. And if some one replies that the other letters should be so placed, one joined to another, say that it is not so, but that they must be left at full liberty, separated from one another by at least the width of an I; & that the A, forming a diphthong with the E, should have no intermediate space at its foot, to which the E, as I have said, should be joined.

I Return to our letters, & proceed to design and write and draw them all, one after the other, with the kindly favour of Our Lord God. First of all, then, in good time, and in the name of God, we shall make a Cross, which, as I have said before, shall be of two lines, one perpendicular and the other transverse and horizontal, to give us good luck and a favourable beginning for our letters, & to aid in drawing them as is meet according to Rule & Compass. This Cross must be as high as it is broad, and as broad as high, in order to its being placed in an equilateral square, wherein we shall make & fashion each letter in its turn, it being divided, truly & exactly, into eleven perpendicular lines & other eleven horizontal lines, cross-wise, which will make a hundred small equilateral squares, of such size that the breadth of one—and of whatsoever one you may choose—will be the pattern and fixed measure of the breadth of the leg of the letter that we desire to make between two parallel lines, according to the space that we may choose to place between them. For, by keeping our proportionate number of eleven lines, we can make the Attic letter as large or as small as we please. The said Cross, & the said Square should be in the form that follows.

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